

Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



Disaster Resources Raised by \$1.4 Billion

In White House meeting, President Bush commits to \$21.4 billion in aid to NYC

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined the New York delegation at a White House meeting last month, where President George W. Bush vowed to provide New York City with an additional \$1.4 billion in aid to recover from the terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center. His pledge raised the total amount dedicated for New York to \$21.4 billion.

"I am hopeful the President will stand by this promise," Velázquez said. "Over the last six months, I have watched residents of my district – including many small business owners in Chinatown – struggle to stay afloat. It is critical for the President to understand that without federal aid, it will be impossible to rebuild New York City."

About \$10 billion of the \$20 billion originally promised by Bush has already been spent. Of the

\$10 billion, a little over \$6 billion has gone to FEMA for clean-up efforts, close to \$3 billion has been used for economic development assistance, and more than \$1 billion was dedicated to other disaster relief and restoration activities.

An additional \$5.5 billion will be used to offer tax incentives for developing Lower Manhattan while \$100 million will go to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The additional funding proposed by President Bush last month would include \$2.75 billion to repair damaged transportation infrastructure, \$1.8 billion in federal transportation money to help plan and build a transit hub, \$167 million for emergency repairs of highways near the World Trade Center, and \$750 million to reimburse costs for repairing damaged facilities.

Velázquez Challenges Bush on Welfare

Proposal demands more work with less child care for working families

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez criticized President George W. Bush's welfare reform proposal last month for provisions banning assistance for legal immigrants, imposing more stringent work requirements and freezing funds for transportation assistance and child care for the next five years.

"We are in the midst of a child care crisis," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "One in four children lives in poverty and more than 50,000 children are on a waiting list for public child care."

The President's plan would require more work from families, but spends no additional money on transportation and child care. Providing those services would make it easier to meet those even tougher new work requirements.

The work requirements would force every state to have 70 percent of its welfare recipients working 40 hours a week. This is a huge increase from the current policy, under which 50 percent of recipients must work at least 30 hours a week.



Congresswoman Velázquez is a leader on welfare rights issues. She introduced a reform bill last year.

Gowanus Canal Feasibility Study Goes Forward

Ecosystem restoration survey another step toward canal reuse

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Colonel John B. O’Dowd and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Joel A. Miele, for the signing of the Gowanus Canal feasibility cost sharing agreement. This will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to complete the Gowanus Canal Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, toward the final goal of redeveloping the entire area.

“More than a century of industrial activity has made the Gowanus a public and environmental hazard,” Congresswoman Velázquez said. “But I strongly believe this project will result in the economic and recreational revitalization of the waterway and the surrounding community.”

The study will cost \$5 million – the federal government has committed half the funds and the other half will come from local sources.

Congresswoman Velázquez successfully secured an additional \$225,000 to undertake a community revitalization plan for the area surrounding the canal. This plan will help to focus the U.S. Army Corps and NYC Department of Environmental Protection feasibility study.



Congresswoman Velázquez urged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an ecosystem restoration feasibility study on the Gowanus Canal.

An integral part of the feasibility phase is public involvement so the community can direct the Gowanus Canal clean-up and development efforts. The Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation, led by Jeanne DiLascio, will be conducting the public involvement segment of this feasibility study.

New Bill to Provide Health Care in Senior Housing

Velázquez initiative would establish health centers for elderly



Congresswoman Velázquez listens to Eva Rafaelin speak at the Sunset Park Senior Citizens Center.

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez introduced legislation last month to improve access to health care for low-income senior citizens.

At the Sunset Park Senior Citizens Center, Congresswoman Velázquez unveiled the Healthcare Accessibility for Seniors Act. It would provide grants for the establishment and operation of health centers in federally assisted housing projects in which at least one in four residents are senior citizens.

The bill also requires that health care organizations for Medicaid beneficiaries provide specific services at the centers.

“This legislation will allow for easier access to health services for our seniors,” Velázquez said. “They would no longer have to travel far for medical care – this bill would bring preventive treatment and immediate care to them.”

The Health Care Accessibility for Seniors Act would also help simplify the medical process since seniors would be able to get their health questions – both simple and complex – answered on site.

Grants Awarded to Our Community

New York State.....\$20,424,856	NYSERDA.....\$850,000
To improve energy efficiency in low-income homes	To advance use of daylight in buildings
NYSERDA.....\$600,000	New York City.....\$117,739,488
Mitigating air flow for health quality and energy demand	Helps communities cope with HIV/AIDS